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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates how a diagram of a Safeway supermarket can be the vehicle for a language lesson based on Lawrence's cognitive categories (classification, definition, spatial order, chronological order, generalizations and specifics, and cause and effect). A wide variety of decision-making activities based on this diagram are described. Some examples of these exercises are: (1) the students must divide the store into sections and give a name to each one; (2) the students must describe the route the customer (Sally) would take to pick up the items on her shopping list; (3) given a list of Sally's weekly grocery items, the students must make inferences as to what kind of cook she is, what kind of meals she prepares, etc.; and (4) in the Safeway Shopping Spree Contest, the students must decide what they would do if they had five minutes to fill up their shopping carts with anything they wished--what items would they select, why, and what route would they take to pick them up. (CFM)

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PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES THAT FOCUS ON THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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Nancy Yildiz is currently working on her Master's in ESL at the University of British Columbia. For the past three years she has been co-ordinating Vancouver Community College Night School English Language Training Program as well as the Special Summer Language Program for visitors to Canada.

Mary S. Lawrence in Writing as a Thinking Process (1975) and Reading, Thinking and Writing (1975) imposes a logical order on reading and writing skills through various patterns which she refers to as the COGNITIVE CATEGORIES OF ORGANIZATION. Some examples of such categories are:

a) Classification: given a list of words such as: tapes, reference books, microfilm reader, periodicals, tape-recorder, current journals, etc. group them according to their similarities or differences.

b) Definition: describe the meaning of the word 'periodical'.

c) Spatial Order: given the floor plan of a library, describe the location of the card catalogue, reference books, etc.

d) Chronological Order: given a list of books and their dates of publication, arrange them in chronological order with the most recent publication first.

e) Generalizations and Specifics: given specific information about one of the authors, make a general statement about his character or personality.

f) Cause/Effect: given a list of the library's problems, predict what effects they will have on the students.

These cognitive categories dictate the exercises and focus on the student's ability to make inferences, manipulate and impose order on data and to synthesize data. Thus the student is learning the target language through the inquiry method.

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The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate first, how a Safeway diagram can be used as a vehicle for Lawrence's cognitive categories and secondly, how these categories of classification, spatial relationships, chronological order etc. are building blocks that enable the participant to become involved in any decision-making process.

Dr. Bernie Mohan defined decisions as "judging and choosing between two or more alternatives and that the participant's values are involved when he must choose or decide which alternative is the best."[1] Five main elements are involved in the decision-making process: 1) understanding of the problem, 2) alternative courses of action, 3) ranking of the alternatives in order of preference, 4) choosing the best alternative and 5) the participant's values and goals.

These elements can be directly linked to Lawrence's cognitive categories because:

a) a participant uses 'definition' to clarify the problem.

b) he uses 'comparison and contrast' when exploring the alternatives.

c) he uses 'cause and effect' and often 'chronological order' when exploring the consequences.

d) he makes 'inferences' (predictions and hypothesis) when exploring the consequences of the alternatives and his feelings about them.

e) he makes 'generalizations and gives specifics' to work out the dilemma and the best solution.

f) he uses all these methods of organization when he expresses his personal opinion and/or makes a proposal to the other participants.

In the ensuing pages I have listed practical examples of classification, spatial and chronological order, cause and effect, etc. that not only show this relationship between decision-making and the cognitive categories but also

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[1]Personal communication from Dr. Mohan, Professor of English Education, University of British Columbia, February 1977.

show the relationship between the language and the situational context and how the student's knowledge of these categories is involved although not directly taught in a speaking discourse.

1. Classification and Description

Each student is given the diagram of a Safeway store and asked to divide the store into as many sections as he wishes, and give each section a 'name'. Class discusses how many departments or sections the store could have.

Written activity: Each student makes a list of the sections, their location and the kinds of items found in each one. The paragraph would start off with a generalization such as:

There are _____ different sections in the supermarket. The fresh meat section is located_____. It has _____, _____ and _____.

2. Spatial Relationships

A student, given a starting point (i.e. entrance "A" to the store) and given a list of five items which she will pick up in the order they are listed, is asked to describe to the class her route using such prepositions as walk down, walk along, across, past, etc. The route could be traced on the supermarket diagram first then put into written form.

i.e. Shopping list: 1. orange juice 2. cheese
3. jam 4. apples
5. bread

Alternate activity: Student 'A' traces the route on the diagram while Student 'B' gives verbal directions.

3. Chronological Order and Spatial Relationships

Using the diagram of a Safeway floor plan and the timetable of Sally's (the customer) activities in the supermarket, each student arranges the events in chronological order and then writes a SUMMARY of what Sally did, giving specific details about where she walked. DO NOT OMIT ANYTHING. It is important to remember that Sally wants to do her shopping quickly and doesn't want to re-trace her steps.

Sally's activities (not in chronological order)

1. she selected a huge roast for dinner
2. she carried the groceries to her car
3. she weighed the apples
4. she paid the cashier
5. she picked up some cheese and milk
6. she put some apples in a bag
7. she went to check-out number 5
8. she got a shopping cart
9. she picked up some lunch bags

Note: It would be a good idea to have the student trace the route on the diagram first and then put it into written form.

Example: When writing a summary use time words such as 'first', 'next', 'afterwards', 'then', etc.

Sally got a shopping cart, then walked down aisle #1 to the end and picked up some _____. Next she pushed her cart along _____ to get _____.

4. Making Inferences (Oral and/or written activity)

Given a list of Sally's weekly grocery items, make inferences as to what kind of a cook she is, or what kind of meals she might make for her family.

Alternate activity: each student is given two different shopping lists and asked to compare the lists and decide what kind of cook would buy such items and give reasons for their answers.

Sally's shopping list	Mary's shopping list
fresh fruits and vegetables	canned fruit
2 sirloin roasts	fresh vegetables
2 litres of milk	3 frozen TV dinners
1 kg. of yogurt	4 T Bone steaks
2 loaves of whole wneat bread	2 tins of spaghetti
3 dozen eggs	6 tins of tomato soup

5. Spatial Relationship and Expressing Preference

You have just won the "SAFEWAY SHOPPING SPREE CONTEST" and are allowed to load your buggy with any food item you want, FREE OF CHARGE. However you only have 5 minutes

in which to do this. Before going to the supermarket, decide what items you would select and why, and secondly what route is the best to take in order to get as much as possible in the time limit.

This would be a good activity to have the students brainstorm in small groups first.

6. Expressing One's Point of View (Interaction Game)

Each student is given an identical list of questions to ask his classmates about what they like or dislike.

For example:

Find a person who	Name of person
1. seldom eats canned soup	_____
2. drinks milk at least twice a day	_____
3. prefers instant coffee to tea	_____
4. thinks frozen TV dinners are tasty	_____

Each student's task is to move about the room asking his classmates what they like or dislike until he has a name by each item.

Follow-up activity: each student has a chance to express why he likes or dislikes a particular food item.

7. Expressing Preference (A Priority List)

Each student lists 10 food items they like to eat, then narrows the list to five items and ranks them in order of preference by numbering them one to five.

Alternate activity: each student lists 5 dinners he would like to make for his friends and lists them according to their taste, with the most delicious as number 1. Secondly, he reorganizes the priority list to take into account the cost factors and the preparation time involved in order to choose one that will taste delicious, be inexpensive and take less than 1½ hours to prepare.

8. Definition and Classification (Oral activity in small groups)

The class is going on a camping trip for three days. Using the Safeway diagram as a guide, each group must decide what ten and only ten items each student will

take in order to maintain a balanced diet and secondly to keep the weight of one's ruck-sack to a minimum. Remember each group must define what a balanced diet is and give a reason why they choose each item.

9. Cause/Consequences

In small groups, the students discuss what they might say when giving a command or a suggestion in a particular situation. Secondly, they discuss what the consequences might be if they say it BLUNTLY (command) or TACTFULLY (suggestion).

Conflict

Note: on each occasion you are a shopper in the supermarket.

1. You see a child you don't know eating some grapes when his mother isn't looking.	Command/ Consequences "Don't touch the grapes."	Suggestion/ Consequences "I don't think you should eat those grapes."
2. You are talking to an employee about the bad oranges you bought here last week when another shopper interrupts you.		
3. You see a lady knock over several cans of soup but doesn't stop to pick them up.		
4. You see a young teenager put a bottle of shampoo into her purse and head for the exit.		

Follow-up activity: in pairs the students are asked to write a dialogue for one of the above situations and then role play the situation for the other class members.

10. An Activity that Shows all the Elements Involved in Decision-Making and Value Clarifications

Oral activity in small groups:

1. Dilemma: You see a customer shoplifting two pounds of butter.

2. Decision: What should you do?

3. Alternatives:
   a. speak to the shoplifter directly
   b. pretend you didn't notice it
   c. tell the manager or salesclerk
   d. follow the shoplifter outside then grab him and report him to the police.

4. Brainstorm all possible solutions to the conflict and consider other alternate ways of handling the dilemma.

5. Identify the consequences of the alternatives and tell how they might affect yourself and others.

6. Rank the alternatives in order of preference and tell how you feel about your decision: feel good, have misgivings, etc.

Activities stemming from this are:

a) DRAMA: Each group dramatizes or role plays one of the alternatives of the dilemma. This activity gives each student the chance to command, threaten, or warn a person and to make suggestions to a person or group of persons. Secondly, the student has to choose whether he is going to do this tactfully or bluntly. Thirdly, the situation gives the student the opportunity to make cause and result statements which could become a real possibility.

   For example: He might say to the shoplifter -

   "Unless you put them back, I'll notify the manager."
   "If you don't put them back, I'll notify the manager."

b) NARRATIVE: (a) each student writes an account of the incident and his choice of a possible solution based on the role play he saw. He could write it from the point of view of the first or third person. (b) each student writes about a dilemma based on one of

his own experiences. (c) each student writes inferences of cause and result which involve hypothetical situations or are based on the given problem.

For example: a. If the shoplifter doesn't get caught, she might_____.

b. If I hadn't noticed the shoplifter, she would have_____.

What are the Main Advantages of These Activities?

1. The supermarket scene allows us to abstract from the real world and get down to semantic descriptions.

2. The criteria of choosing a real-life situation provides a means of going from the core situation to an enriched situation. For example we move from the supermarket scene to a discussion of foods we like or dislike, to what foods consist of a balanced diet.

3. The activities focus on personal participation and try to capitalize on the student's experiences and opinions.

4. It shows how alternative grammatical shapes can be used to express the same meaning. In other words, it is a PROCESS of linking semantics and syntax.

For example:

a. when a student gives a message he can express it by making a suggestion or giving a command.

"Don't touch the grapes."
"I don't think you should eat those grapes."

b. when he makes predictions and hypothesis he uses the conditional 'if'.

c. when he expresses his personal opinion he uses such structure as:

I think_____	I disagree_____
I consider_____	In my view_____
I agree_____	In my opinion_____

d. when he makes a proposal he might use one of the following structures:

I propose that_____
I suggest that_____
It seems feasible that_____

5. The semantic element of 'preference' plays a major role in each activity in that it cuts across decisions and values. However, the categories of personal opinion, prediction, hypothesis, etc. play an important role in the student deciding his preference.

6. The activities force the student to make inferences based on the given data.

7. The exercises help the student identify a sequence of logical relationships and learn to organize his thoughts logically.

8. Finally, the activities cut across the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

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